

10 Powerful Habits for Marketing Yourself (and Building a Personal Brand)

Building and promoting your own personal brand is as important for you as it is for any company. Maybe more.



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We all know the power of brands. Who anywhere in the world isn't familiar with McDonald's fabled golden arches, Coca-Cola's distinctive red-and-white logo, or the green Starbucks mermaid?

But here's a secret--building and promoting your own personal brand is just as important for your success and happiness as it is for any business. In fact, since it's you we're talking about, it might be even more important.

In her book *Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself*, executive coach, trainer, and consultant Rita B. Allen explains that there are 10 habits you should adopt to market yourself while building a more powerful personal brand.

1. Identify specific target markets

When you're building your brand, it's better to first focus on a few, most-promising targets, than to try to reach out to the entire world all at once. You'll get the greatest payoff for your time and money by identifying the segments of your market where you are likely to achieve the greatest rewards, and then pursuing them relentlessly.

2. Know your marketplace

Your brand is only as good as you are. Stay up to date with your industry--the latest news, practices, companies, and other information. The moment you begin to fall behind is the moment your brand will begin to tarnish.

3. Be visible and "in play"

Building a brand means getting out of your office and becoming very visible to your target audience and potential customers and clients. Attend networking events and become active in your profession and community. The more visible you are, the stronger your brand.

4. Become a source of relevant information

You should be someone people contact when they want expert advice or information on a particular topic. When you build a following as a content expert, you put yourself in position to be viewed as a trusted authority, which will attract people to you.

5. Always give something back to your profession and community

When you give back to others, not only will you gain the personal satisfaction that comes from doing it, but you'll build your brand in ways that money can't buy. People will remember the good deeds you have done, and your personal brand will benefit as a result.

6. Practice networking etiquette

Networking is all about marketing yourself, but it's also about giving others the opportunity to market themselves to you. Make sure that your networking efforts are beneficial to both you and to the people with whom you are networking. It's a two-way street.

7. Maintain your shelf life and develop an effective social media presence

In the publishing world of which I am a part, you're only as good as your latest book. Don't rest on your laurels, as impressive as they may be. Continue to do great work and achieve great things. And in these days of social media, don't ignore your LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and other accounts.

8. Create a networking database

Keep an up-to-date computer listing or database of all your networking contacts and social media connections.

9. Have a clear, brief message to deliver

The founder of every startup has a well-honed elevator pitch--ready to break out at a moment's notice when the opportunity presents itself. You should have a similar pitch ready for your own personal brand. What is your value proposition? Why should someone work with you?

10. Don't ever stop!

Building and marketing a personal brand is all about generating momentum--and then sustaining it over a long period of time. Once you get the ball rolling, then keep it rolling. It's a lot easier to keep the momentum going than it is to start all over again from scratch.